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Translating, Adapting, and Reimagining Edo-Era Graphic Narratives: From *Kibyōshi* to Global Visual Culture[1]

Introduction

Kibyōshi 黄表紙, the satirical picture booklets of Edo-period Japan (1603–1868), are often regarded as precursors to the modern comic book. They weave text and image into an integrated field of meaning, combining wit, parody, and social observation with an immediacy that appealed to both informed readers and casual audiences. Their layered storytelling, playful yet reflective, captured the rhythms and contradictions of late eighteenth-century urban life.

Translating *kibyōshi* for global audiences, however, poses a persistent dilemma. Conventional translations, grounded in philological precision, rely heavily on annotation to explain cultural references and wordplay. While this practice preserves historical detail, it disrupts narrative flow and limits accessibility beyond specialist readerships. Efforts to modernize the language or simplify the visuals have likewise struggled to preserve the genre's balance of humor and critique.

The present discussion approaches *kibyōshi* not as static historical texts but as dynamic visual narratives that invite reinterpretation across media and cultures. By embedding contextual cues within the narrative and integrating textual and visual adaptation, it explores how *kibyōshi* can be revitalized as an intercultural form that sustains the vitality of Edo humor while resonating with contemporary sensibilities.

1. The Evolution of Kibyōshi Research and Translation Challenges

Emerging in the late eighteenth century, *kibyōshi* captured the sensibilities of the *ukiyo* 浮世 ("floating world") and reflected the intellectual and aesthetic vitality of Edo's urban culture. These illustrated narratives wove word and image to critique social norms and political authority while entertaining a wide readership. Initially intended for educated samurai, they soon reached townspeople, merchants, and women through the spread of lending libraries and advances in woodblock printing.

Although *kibyōshi* enjoyed immense popularity in its own time, early twentieth-century scholarship dismissed it as a mere form of amusement. This view began to

change with the work of Nakamura Yoshihiko[2] and Inoue Takaaki,[3] who recognized its layered narratives and social acuity.

Tanahashi Masahiro's bibliographic projects in the 1980s further consolidated its status by systematically cataloguing surviving works and making them available to researchers.[4]

Public interest in *kibyōshi* has grown again in recent years. The 2024 announcement of an NHK drama on the publisher Tsutajū 蔦重[5] stimulated new editions and studies, drawing fresh attention to the genre.[6] In parallel with this renewed momentum, contemporary scholars such as Michael Emmerich, Laura Moretti, and Yukiko Satō have expanded the field through global and interdisciplinary perspectives. Emmerich traces *kibyōshi*'s transformation from Edo entertainment to a transnational form,[7] while Moretti and Satō illuminate the intricate relationship between visual and textual composition and its position as a forerunner of modern graphic narratives.[8]

Translation practice has evolved alongside this scholarship. Most editions retain the original illustrations and provide direct translations with extensive notes. Important contributions include Martina Schönbein's study of Santō Kyōden's political humor,[9] Stella Bartels-Wu's translations of Takizawa Bakin's 滝沢馬琴 (1767–1848) *Gōkan* 合巻,[10] and Haruo Shirane's introductions to the works of Santō Kyōden 山東京伝 (1761–1816) and Koikawa Harumachi 恋川春町 (1744–1789).[11] More recent examples, such as Pieterjan Debouck's translation of *Tamamigaku Aoto*

2   Nakamura Yoshihiko, 'Gesakuron'. In *Nakamura Yoshihiko Chojutsushū*, Vol. 8. Chūōkōronsha, 1982.

3   Inoue, Takaaki. *Edo Gesaku no Kenkyū: Kibyōshi o Shu to Shite,* Shintensha, 1986.

4   Tanahashi Masahiro, *Kibyōshi Sōran*, 3 volumes, *Nihon Shoshigaku Taikei*, Volumes 48 (1)–(3), Aomodō Shoten, Vol. 1: 1986, Vol. 2: 1989, Vol. 3: 1989. Tanahashi Masahiro, *Kibyōshi no Kenkyū,* Wakakusa Shobō, 1997. Tanahashi Masahiro, *Santō Kyōden no Kibyōshi o Yomu: Edo no Keizai to Shakai Fūzoku,* Perikansha, 2012.

5   Tsutaya Jūzaburō (蔦屋重三郎; 1750–1797) was a prominent Edo-period publisher known for his influential role in Japanese *ukiyo-e* and literary publishing, including the production of *kibyōshi*.

6   Among others, recent publications such as Sō no Kai (ed.), *Edo no Ehon Dokkai Manyuaru: Kodomo kara Otona made Tanoshinda Kusazōshi no Yomikata*, Bungaku Tsūshin, 2023, and Yamawaki Nao (author), Nakamura Masaaki (supervision), *Sugu Yomeru! Tsutaya Jūzaburō to Edo no Kibyōshi*, Jiji Tsūshinsha, 2024, highlight the growing interest in and accessibility of *kusazōshi* 草双紙 studies for both academic and general audiences.

7   Michael Emmerich, 'Picture Books: From Akahon to Kibyōshi and Gōkan'. In Shirane, H., Suzuki, T., Lurie, D. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature,* Cambridge University Press, 2015, 510–522.

8   Moretti Laura, Satō Yuiko, *Graphic Narratives from Early Modern Japan,* Columbia University Press, 2024.

9   Martina Schönbein (trans.), *Das Kibyōshi 'Happyakuman Ryō Kogane no Kamibana' von Santô Kyôden (1791): Ein Beitrag zur Edition japanischer Texte der Edo-Zeit,* Otto Harrassowitz, 1987.

10 Stella Bartels-Wu (ed. and trans.), *Mitatemono und Kibyōshi: Edition, Bearbeitung und Übersetzung 'Myōkinako Kogome Dōmyōji' (1805),* 1994.

11 Haruo Shirane (ed.), *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600–1900,* Columbia University Press, 2002.

ga Zeni (玉磨青砥銭),[12] synthesize earlier approaches while emphasizing satire as a key interpretive lens. My own Hungarian translation project adopts a similar concern for accessibility, seeking to retain Edo humor and intellectual nuance through culturally balanced language rather than heavy annotation.[13]

Other forms of adaptation, including "dubbed" versions that replace *kuzushiji* 崩字 with modern script, have sought to make *kibyōshi* accessible to contemporary Japanese readers. Yamaguchi Takeshi's 1926 re-editions[14] and Sugiura Hinako's 1989 manga-style rewrites[15] exemplify early attempts to bridge this divide. Adam L. Kern advanced the approach by providing an English translation that situates *kibyōshi* within the broader context of Edo publishing culture,[16] while Adam Cabatt[17] and Tanahashi Masahiro[18] modernized the Japanese language and imagery to enhance readability. Yet these projects often remain bound by domestic cultural codes and are rarely designed for international audiences.

The challenge of translating *kibyōshi* lies in its multimodal structure and the interdependence of visual form, linguistic play, and social context. Wordplay, idioms, and *kuzushiji* script are embedded in the illustrations, demanding interpretive agility and historical expertise. Recent developments in digital humanities have begun to engage these issues. The application of TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) standards has enabled the representation of early modern illustrated fiction in structured digital form. As Takasuka Moe, Homma Jun, Nagasaki Kiyonori, and Kigoshi Shunsuke (2025) observe, even fully TEI-compliant models cannot yet capture the dynamic interplay between text and image. Their work highlights both the potential and the limitations of encoding. While TEI provides a framework for organizing content, it cannot convey the interpretive ambiguity or visual density that define the genre, particularly when balancing scholarly rigor with general readability. These unresolved questions point to the need for complementary methods that integrate translation, visualization, and cultural interpretation.[19]

The following sections propose two approaches that address this problem, seeking a balance between historical fidelity and accessibility for a global readership.

[12] Pieterjan Debouck, *Satire within Kibyōshi in Eighteenth-Century Edo: A Translation and Analysis of Santō Kyōden's 'Tama Migaku Aoto ga Zeni',* Ghent University, 2018.

[13] Csendom Andrea (trans.), *Kinkin szenszei álmától a jó és rossz lelkek küzdelméig: Három edói kibjósi a XVIII. század végi Japánból,* ed. Buda Attila,Ráció Publishing, 2021.

[14] 13 'Nihon Meicho Zenshū'. In Yamaguchi Takeshi (ed.), *Edo Literature, Volume 11 (Twenty-Five Kibyōshi)*, Nihon Meicho Zenshū Publishing Association, Taishō 15 (1926).

[15] Sugiura Hinako, *Edo e Yōkoso* (Chikuma Bunko Su 2-2), Chikuma Shobō, 1989.

[16] Adam L Kern, *Manga from the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan*, University of Chicago Press, 2006.

[17] Adam Cabatt (ed.), *Edo Manga 1: Imo Jigoku,* Tokyo, Shōgakukan, 2014.

[18] Tanahashi Masahiro (ed.), *Edo Manga 2: Ningyo Name,* Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2014.

[19] Takasuka Moe, et al., '*Kibyōshi* no aratana dokkai kankyō ni mukete: TEI gaidorain ni junpyo shita kōzōka no kanōsei [Towards a New Reading Experience for Kibyōshi: Exploring the Potential of Structuring in Accordance with TEI Guidelines]'. *Kenkyū hōkoku Jinbun Kagaku to Konpyūta (CH)*, 2025-CH-138.17, 1–10.

2. From Footnotes to Embedded Context: Rethinking Accessibility

Conventional translations of *kibyōshi* rely heavily on footnotes to clarify cultural nuances, idiomatic expressions, and historical references. While indispensable for specialists, this approach fragments the reading experience and distances general audiences from the fluid interplay of text and image that defines the genre. A name such as "Kanemura Kinbei" 金村金兵衛, with its comic repetition of "金" (*kane, kin*, money, gold), illustrates this difficulty. Translators may leave it in the original form, explain it in a note, or render it as a playful equivalent such as "Goldy McGold." Each solution risks diminishing the humor's immediacy or interrupting the reading rhythm.

A more integrative approach embeds concise explanations within the dialogue or narration, allowing meaning to emerge organically from the text. This method preserves cultural resonance while maintaining narrative continuity. By incorporating contextual cues directly into the story, *kibyōshi* can retain its historical depth while remaining accessible and engaging for a broad contemporary readership.

2.1. Case Study 1: Translating *Atariyashita Jihon Doiya* by Jippensha Ikku

Jippensha Ikku's 十返舎一九 (1765–1831) *Atariyashita Jihon Doiya* (的中地本問屋, "It's a Hit! The Local Book Wholesaler"), published in 1802, humorously exposes the contradictions of Edo's publishing world. The narrative features female binders engaged in self-referential banter about the quality of the book they are assembling. The following excerpt, shown in Figure 1, presents the original Japanese text (1a–2a), Lawrence Marceau's English translation (1b–2b),[20] and my adapted version (1c–2c), which incorporates embedded context to preserve the original's wit.[21]

1a) （とじる女1: ） ここは何もかくことがないそうだ
(Tojiru onna 1: Koko wa nani mo kaku koto ga nai sō da)
1b) Binder 1: "They don't need to write anything at all here!" *(Aridōshi tale superfluous, leaving the illustration to speak for itself—footnote).*
1c) Binder 1: "They say it's fine as it is, nothing more to write or draw here."

2a) （とじる女2: ）とんだ、このほんはおもしろいよ
(Tojiru onna 3: Tonda, kono hon wa omoshiroi yo)
2b) Binder 2: "This is such a fascinating book!" *(Sarcastically, one would imagine—footnote).*
2c) Binder 2: "Oh, come on! This book is just so 'fascinating'—if you don't mind guessing what's missing!"

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[20]   Lawrence E. Marceau, 'Behind the scenes: narrative and self-referentiality in Edo illustrated popular fiction'. *Japan Forum*, 21: 3 (2009), 417.
[21]   In this study, embedded context refers to explanatory elements inserted within dialogue or imagery rather than as external footnotes.

Figure 1: Comparative translation of selected dialogue from Atariyashita Jihon Doiya

2.2. Commentary on the Ambiguity

Marceau interprets Binder 1's remark as a deliberate gesture by the author, allowing the illustration to carry the story's weight, while Binder 2's sarcasm mocks the book's perceived incompleteness. Yet this reading relies heavily on footnotes that interrupt the reader's flow and obscure the humor's immediacy. The original term *kaku* (かく), written in cursive, may mean either "to write" (書く) or "to draw" (描く). This lexical ambiguity creates a layered wordplay that merges verbal and visual creativity, inviting multiple interpretations.

My translation retains this ambiguity while allowing readers to experience the irony without external explanation. Binder 2's quip about the book's incompleteness reflects a self-aware critique of the publishing process, an attitude that modern audiences familiar with metafictional humor can readily appreciate. By embedding interpretive cues directly into the dialogue rather than relegating them to notes, the

translation maintains historical nuance while ensuring readability. This approach preserves the layered wit of Edo commentary and renders *kibyōshi* intelligible as both a work of satire and a mirror of its own production.

2.3. Translating Pictures

The illustrations in *kibyōshi* are central to its humor, for text and image operate together to create layered meanings. Edo readers could easily recognize the familiar gestures, settings, and conventions that enriched each scene, yet even they sometimes faced interpretive challenges. Modern readers encounter far greater distance, not only in language but also in visual codes and cultural references.

Adam Kern's concept of "thick translation" sought to overcome these barriers by replacing *kuzushiji* text within illustrations with English equivalents and supplementary explanations.[22] He identified the core difficulty not in linguistic wordplay alone but in the interpretation of visual elements and material details. Building upon this insight, my adaptations of *Atariyashita Jihon Doiya* (Figure 1) and *Tenka Ichimen Kagami no Umebachi* (天下一面鏡梅鉢, "The Mirror of the Realm: The Plum Flower Crest", Figures 3 and 4) expand the method through visual labeling and embedded contextual guidance. Elements such as "Main Text" or "Conversation" are added directly within the image to orient readers and replace the need for footnotes. This integration allows the visual field to serve both as illustration and commentary, sustaining narrative flow while preserving interpretive depth.

Although such image-based adaptations require careful digital reconstruction and editorial precision, they substantially enhance accessibility. Readers can experience the interaction of word and image as a unified composition rather than as two separate systems mediated by annotations.

A further possibility lies in colorizing original prints and including guiding elements, such as arrows or numbered dialogues, to clarify the flow of speech and identify speakers. Colorization inevitably departs from the historical monochrome style, yet for contemporary readers accustomed to digital media, it can increase engagement and comprehension.

3. Visual Rewriting as Translation: Integrating Image and Text

Adapting *kibyōshi* for modern readers requires a careful balance between historical authenticity and accessibility. Recent Japanese reinterpretations of Edo-period works have sought to achieve this by preserving original illustrations while modernizing language, humor, and narrative structure to reflect the rhythm of contemporary graphic storytelling. Adam Cabatt and Tanahashi Masahiro simplify Edo-period phrasing into conversational modern Japanese and reorganize

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[22] Kern, *Manga from the Floating World*, 2006, 255–261.

fragmented episodes into coherent storylines.[23] Adam Kern's translation of Santō Kyōden's *Gozonji no Shōbai Mono* (御存商売物, "Those Familiar Bestsellers") offers another important model.[24] His work combines detailed annotation with contextual commentary and reconfigured images, allowing text and illustration to communicate with equal weight.

Building on these precedents, my approach extends the principle of visual rewriting by embedding contextual information directly into the narrative rather than isolating it as an annotation. Idiomatic expressions and period-specific jokes are translated into modern equivalents that retain their ironic tone, while verbose Edo diction is rendered in concise, contemporary phrasing. This creates a reading experience that preserves humor and rhythm without sacrificing depth.

Contextual elements are also integrated into the visual field. Reading directions, environmental markers, and interpretive notes appear within the composition itself, guiding the reader through the relationship between text and image. This integration reduces reliance on footnotes and encourages engagement with *kibyōshi* as a continuous visual narrative rather than a textual puzzle.

Through this method, *kibyōshi* retains its artistic and historical integrity while becoming legible and appealing to a diverse global audience. The result is not a simplification but a form of cultural mediation that allows readers to encounter Edo wit and social reflection through the visual language of the present.

3.1. Case Study 2: Translating *Tenka Ichimen Kagami no Umebachi*

Created by Tōrai Sanna 唐来参和 (1744–1810) in 1789, *Tenka Ichimen Kagami no Umebachi* offers a subtle critique of the Kansei Reforms (1787–1793) led by Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信 (1759–1829). The work presents a world where volcanic ash turns into gold coins, alluding to the 1783 eruption of Mount Asama 浅間山 and the social disruption that followed. Beneath its surface narrative, the *kibyōshi* reimagines both natural disaster and political order, embedding social satire within an apparently whimsical story. The depiction of "absurd prosperity" features a Nara-period emperor reminiscent of Sadanobu, while the eruption of Sado's volcano symbolically recalls Mount Asama.

This section presents the original Japanese text with romanization (3a), a faithful modern translation (3b), and a contemporary adaptation (3c) integrated into Figures 3 and 4. In the modern adaptation, the translation is placed directly within the image, enabling the page itself to function as a *kibyōshi* that unites text and illustration in their original relationship. Both versions were produced by the author.

The faithful translation closely adheres to the historical text, preserving its literal content and surface-level meaning. However, without detailed contextual

23 CABATT, *Edo Manga 1: Imo Jigoku*, 2014. TANAHASHI, *Edo Manga 2: Ningyo Name*, 2014.
24 KERN, *Manga from the Floating World*, 2006, 255–261.

notes, the deeper layer of political satire remains largely inaccessible to modern readers unfamiliar with Edo culture.

By contrast, the modern adaptation makes these implicit meanings explicit. It brings hidden allusions and wordplay to the foreground, allowing readers to perceive the critique directed toward Edo's social and political conditions. The translation retains humor and irony but recasts them in expressions familiar to contemporary audiences.

This approach prioritizes interpretive clarity and cultural accessibility while preserving the original's aesthetic and tonal integrity. For readers encountering *kibyōshi* for the first time, a literal translation can make its multiple layers of meaning difficult to grasp. Because the genre's central purpose was to comment on society through humor, the adaptation makes this satirical dimension more direct, ensuring that both the laughter and the criticism embedded in the work remain vivid and intelligible to present-day audiences.

Figure 2: Original Facsimile of Tenka Ichimen Kagami no Umebachi, source NDL online

3a. Original Japanese Text with Romanization

天皇の御代栄えんと吾妻なるみちのく山はいうに及ばず、そのほか、佐渡の金山焼け出したかどうしたか、諸国へ金銀降るところこと三日三夜にして、諸人よろこぶ事大方ならず。

(Tennō no miyo sakaen to Azuma naru Michinoku yama wa iu ni oyobazu, sono hoka, Sado no kinzan yake dashita ka dō shita ka, shokoku e kingin furu tokoro koto mikka miya ni shite, morobito yorokobu koto ōkata narazu.)

(男1)「すぐに灰を吹き分けて、極印まで打ってある金が降るとは、ハテナア」

(Otoko 1: "Sugu ni hai o fuki wakete, gokuin made utte aru kin ga furu to wa, hatenaā.")

(男2)「坂は照るてる鈴鹿は曇る。佐渡の金山金が降る。」

(Otoko 2: "Saka wa teru teru Suzuka wa kumoru. Sado no kinzan kin ga furu.")

（男3)「ちと降りが小粒になった」

(Otoko 3: "Chito furi ga kotsubu ni natta.")

(女)「この子は、せいだして拾やな」

(Onna: "Kono ko wa, sei dashite hiroyana.")

(子供)「金こんこんよ」

(Kodomo: "Kane konkon yo.")

3b. Faithful Translation with Possible Footnotes

Under the Emperor's reign, prosperity abounds. Even the distant mountains of Michinoku flourish. Beyond this, it is said that the gold mines of Sado burst forth, sending gold and silver raining down across the provinces for three days and nights. The people's joy was beyond measure.

(Michinoku 陸奥(Tōhoku region): Refers to an 8th-century *Man'yōshū* (万葉集) poem linking imperial prosperity to "golden flowers" in Michinoku. Here, "golden flowers" symbolize gold coins falling from a volcano (Tennō no miyo sakaemu to Azuma naru Michinoku yama ni kin ka saku). [Footnote 1])

(Sado's gold mines: Replaces Mount Asama's eruption (Tenmei 3, 1783), which caused famine and political reforms under Matsudaira Sadanobu. The disaster is reimagined as "absurd prosperity," critiquing Edo-era socio-political realities. [Footnote 2])

(Man 1:) "Strange indeed: gold is falling, stamped with official seals, as if it had been refined and cast straight from the ashes."

(Official seals on the gold: Symbolize wealth under organized governance, ironically referencing Matsudaira Sadanobu's reforms during the famine and inflation, when gold coins were distributed to the people. [Footnote 3]).
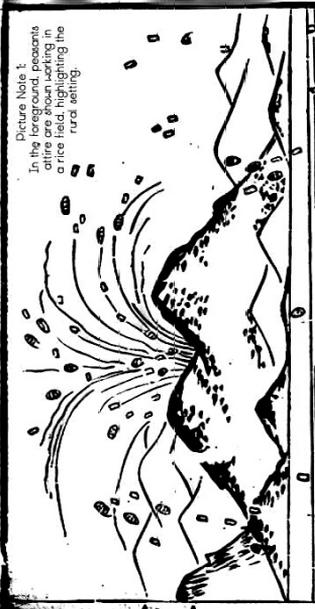
(Man 2:) "The slopes shine brightly, while Suzuka is cloudy. Gold is falling from the Sado mines."

(Suzuka鈴鹿: Historically described as cloudy in poetic references, it contrasts with the shining prosperity depicted here. [Footnote 4])

Figure 3 and 3c: Modern Translational Adaptation of *Tenka Ichimen Kagami no Umebachi* (Black-and-White Version)

(Man 3:) "Hmm, the gold seems to be falling in smaller pieces now."
(The diminishing size of the gold pieces: Humorously critiques the unsustainable nature of wealth and extravagance. [Footnote 5])
(Woman:) "Hurry, child, gather as much as you can with all your strength!"
(Child:) "Gold, gold, shiny gold!"
(This playful line echoes the nursery rhyme *Yuki ya konkon* （雪やこんこん，"Snow falls"), replacing "snow" with "gold" to highlight the absurdity. [Footnote 6])

3.2. Balancing Fidelity and Accessibility

The faithful translation (3b) conveys the exaggerated prosperity depicted in *Tenka Ichimen Kagami no Umebachi*, preserving both humor and historical resonance. Gold-stamped coins, Edo-period landscapes, and other cultural markers are retained to evoke the original's atmosphere. Yet the layers of meaning embedded in these scenes can easily obscure the satire for modern readers unfamiliar with Edo customs and literary conventions. In this form, footnotes remain essential, providing the historical and cultural explanations necessary to uncover the author's critique.

The modern adaptation (3c in Figures 3 and 4) reframes the narrative for a broader readership by simplifying cultural references and embedding explanatory cues directly in the dialogue. Implicit allusions to the *Man'yōshū* and Sado are replaced with explicit references to Matsudaira Sadanobu and Mount Asama, making the satire's political targets clear without external annotation. Contextual information is also integrated into the visual field, with captions and environmental cues guiding interpretation.

Through this method, the adaptation transforms cultural distance into interpretive immediacy. While it inevitably modifies certain textual subtleties, it retains the core humor and critical tone that define *kibyōshi* as both social commentary and entertainment. The result is a version that sustains fidelity to the original's intent while ensuring readability and engagement for global audiences.

Adapting high-context *kibyōshi* for a modern, low-context global audience requires making implicit meanings visible and clarifying cultural references that would otherwise remain obscure.

As shown in Figure 3, a fully adapted version places the translated text within the illustrations, transforming the *kibyōshi* into a unified visual–narrative experience. The alignment of dialogue and imagery preserves the original's rhythm and satirical tone while adjusting the historical frame for contemporary readers. Although the work was originally printed in black and white, the selective use of color enhances legibility and engagement for audiences accustomed to digital media. Figure 4 presents this colorized adaptation, designed to reflect both the spirit and the visual palette of late Edo culture. The original version with cursive script is included in Figure 2 for comparison.
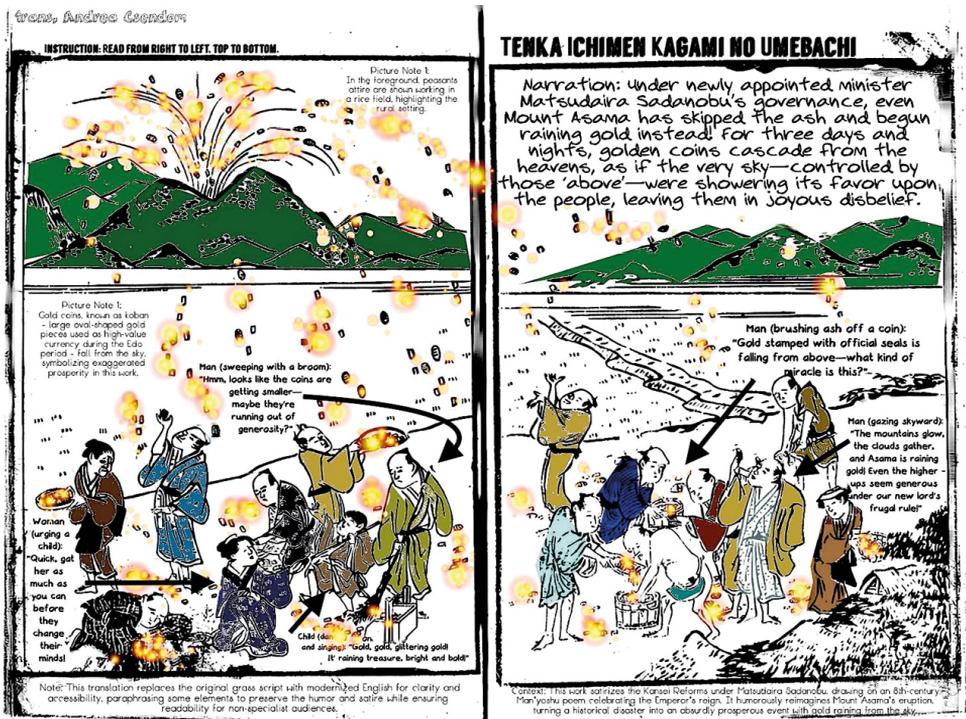
Figure 4 and 3c: Modern Translational Adaptation of *Tenka Ichimen Kagami no Umebachi* (Colorized Version)

These visual reinterpretations, achieved through typographic variation and dynamic composition, invite readers to experience *kibyōshi* as a living form of storytelling rather than a historical artifact. They also establish a foundation for future AI-assisted reanimation, in which the dialogue between text and image can evolve into motion-based intercultural interpretation.

4. Conclusion

Translating and reimagining *kibyōshi* for modern, global readers requires a careful balance between historical fidelity and accessibility. Traditional translation methods preserve linguistic precision and cultural depth but rely heavily on annotations, which can fragment the reading experience and distance the text from general audiences. In contrast, approaches that integrate cultural context directly into the narrative and visual structure can maintain reader engagement without compromising the integrity of the original work.

Drawing on both textual and visual strategies, this study proposes a methodology that embeds contextual information within dialogue and illustration. The case studies of *Atariyashita Jihon Doiya* and *Tenka Ichimen Kagami no Umebachi* demonstrate

how brief explanations, restructured dialogue, and visual labels can guide readers through the complexity of Edo-period conventions without resorting to external notes. Modern tools such as colorization and interactive visualization further enhance this approach, enabling communication of humor and social critique across languages and media environments.

At the core of this approach is Intercultural Historical Competence, a framework developed in my ongoing research.[25] It encourages an understanding of *kibyōshi* not merely as a historical source but as a living record of Edo-period thought, emotion, and imagination. By connecting the social consciousness of Edo with contemporary interpretive practices, this framework transforms *kibyōshi* into a medium of intercultural dialogue. Preserving its wit, critique, and layered meanings, the translation of *kibyōshi* thus becomes an act of cultural mediation that revitalizes Edo's humor for a global age.

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Abstract

Kibyōshi, the satirical picture books of Edo Japan, pose enduring challenges for translation because of their interwoven text, imagery, and humor. Conventional translations, burdened with extensive footnotes, often alienate general readers and fragment the narrative flow. Drawing on Atariyashita Jihon Doiya *and* Tenka Ichimen Kagami no Umebachi *as case studies, the discussion examines how meaning and irony shift across linguistic and visual borders. By embedding cultural context in dialogue and illustration and integrating textual and visual reinterpretation, the approach shows how historical authenticity and accessibility can coexist. The aim is to reanimate* kibyōshi *as living works of intercultural imagination, intelligible and engaging to a global audience.*

Keywords: *Kibyōshi*, translation, cultural adaptation, humor, early modern Japan

Rezümé
Edo-kori szatirikus képeskönyvek fordítása és újragondolása modern,
globális közönség számára

Ez a tanulmány az Edo-korszak japán szatirikus képeskönyvének, a kibjósinak modern fordítási módszereit vizsgálja. A hagyományos fordításokat gyakran magyarázó jegyzetek terhelik, amelyek megnehezítik a megértést a nem szakavatott olvasók számára. A tanulmány az Atarijasita Dzsihon Doija *és a* Tenka Icsimen Kagami no Umebacsi *fordítási mintáin keresztül mutatja be a humor, a társadalomkritika, valamint a szöveg és az illusztrációk összetett kapcsolatának megőrzésével járó kihívásokat. Az elbeszélésbe és illusztrációkba ágyazott kulturális kontextus, valamint a szöveg és képek adaptációjának új típusú megközelítése egyensúlyt teremthet a történelmi hűség és a modern hozzáférhetőség között, biztosítva, hogy a kibjósi a mai olvasók számára is érthető és releváns olvasmány legyen.*

Kulcsszavak: *kibjósi, fordítás, kulturális adaptáció, humor, koraújkori Japán*